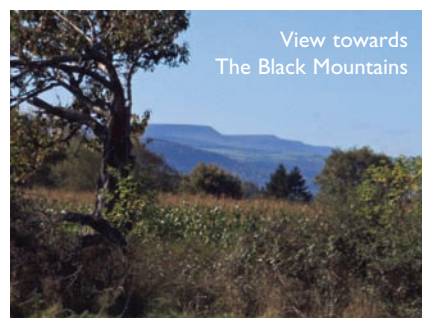


History echoes around Elm Meadow

The past comes alive on a walk through Almeley led by Greta Pennington of Mortimer Group Ramblers

Almeley is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it appears that it was a fairly large manor, as it had an area of three to four hundred acres, held by Roger de Laci. It is also mentioned in some records from the 14th century. It is a fairly isolated village, 400 feet above sea level, with good views to the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons. It is a site that could have been easily defended and it



also has a very good supply of water. The name Almeley means elm meadow. It was the birthplace of Sir John Oldcastle, who it is said was possibly the basis for Shakespeare's character, Falstaff. He was a Lollard and was executed in 1417.

1 From the village hall, walk down the road, past the school, towards the Church. The Bells Inn lies up the road to the right. At the junction, cross over and go down left for about 10 yards to the stile on the right. This gives you access to the castle remains. Walk round the castle on the side of the moat. This castle was probably built in the early 13th century in the reign of King John. When Henry III visited in 1231 he received homage from Simon de Montfort. By the 17th century the

castle was a ruin. You have a good view of the church from here. Return to the stile and go back up to the entrance to the churchyard. St Mary's dates from 1200 when the tower was begun. Much of the main part is from the 13th and early 14th century. There is a pretty painted ceiling above the rood. Leave the churchyard at the back of the tower by the road to Eardisley. Just down to the right are the old pump and a slate with features of the parish. On leaving the churchyard walk left along the road to pass Almeley Manor on your right. This dates from the 14th century. It was occupied by the Snead Family for 300 years. Continue along the road for a short distance to a lane on the right leading to Batch Cottage.

2 Walk up the lane to the kissing gate. Soon after passing the cottage you can see on the left that the ground rises steeply, to form a spur. On this the first castle, called Oldcastle Twt was built. Continue on through the Batch, as this wooded area is called, for about two thirds mile. At the end of the woods, the path rises to a small road. Turn right to the main road where the Summer House, Almeley Wooton, is situated along on the right. This house was given to the Quakers, by Roger Prichard, in 1673. This Friends Meeting House is still used regularly by local Quakers. His son Edward Prichard and brother-in law John Eckley worshipped here and were involved with William Penn in establishing the Pennsylvania Colony, in America in 1682. Go down the road towards Almeley for about quarter mile then go over the stile on the left and slant across to the left to the next stile. Go to the

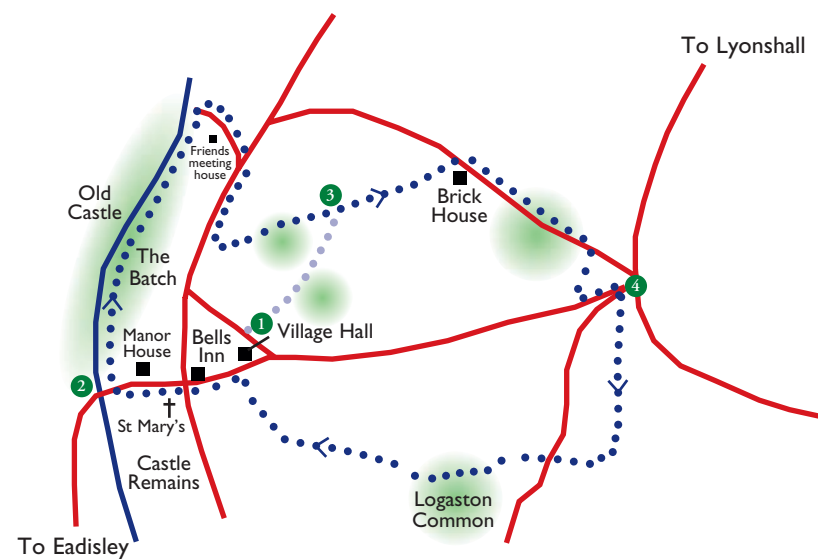
right to the next stile and then keep to the right to follow round the copse to the next stile.

3 At this point you have a choice. On your right, there is a stile that leads to a lane. This lane, Kymmmin Lane, goes back to Almeley. It is a very well marked lane that takes you back to the top of the common in the village. Down to the left you can see the village hall. This gives a walk of three miles. To continue on the longer walk, do not cross the stile on the right, but walk along by the hedge on the right side of the field. Cross the next stile and go over the streambed on the plank. At the stile at the end of the field, go left up to Brick House farm and cross the common going right, in front of the house, to the road. Walk along this road for about half a mile. About 100 yards past Tan House Cottage, cross the stile on the right and go straight ahead across the field to the gate on the left. Go along the track to the road and turn left. Follow on round on this road until you come to the building, another Friends Meeting Place, but now not used, on the right.

4 Go down along the side of the building, to the kissing gate on the right. Walk right down the field keeping to the hedge on the right. Go through the gap and follow the hedge to the bottom. As you walk down these fields you have very good views to the right, over to the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons. There is a finger post here. Go over the stile and turn right into the lane. This is an old track. At the end you come up to a riding stables. Follow the lane along to the road. Walk along to the junction and carry on



Pretty cottage at Logaston



straight ahead, and stay on this minor road until you reach Logaston Common. Follow the track to the right along the top of the common and beside the hedge, down to the corner. Cross the footbridge and the two stiles, over the next stile and come out into the field. Go right alongside the hedge to the gate; walk over the next field to the next gate. The tower of Almeley Church is straight ahead of you. Cross over the streambed, and continue over the field

to the stile ahead of you. Then, walk over the field to the double stile, which is slightly to the left. Go up to the next double stile. Cross over right into the field and walk up alongside the hedge to the double stile. After crossing this walk up the field to the road. Turn right to the village hall. ■

FOR MORE WALKS



Walk information

Start/parking: Almeley Village Hall. OS ref. 337516

Maps: OS Explorer 201

Distance: 5.5 miles or 3 miles

Grade: Easy – lanes, fields and woods

Stiles: 14

Public Transport: Buses from Kington, Leominster and Hereford. See www.herefordbus.info or phone 01432 260211

Nearest town: Kington

Refreshments: Bells Inn (01544 327216) up right from the church

Toilets: None

The Ramblers

The Ramblers is Britain's biggest charity working to promote walking and to improve conditions for all walkers. The Ramblers is celebrating its 75th anniversary and has won many victories, the most recent being the new coastal access legislation. In Herefordshire there are four local groups, Hereford, Mortimer, Ross-on-Wye and Leadon Vale.

For more information contact Tom Fisher, tel: 01886 821544 or email: tomfisher@virgin.net

